According to official tradition, the Spirit of Hua-shan is Shan-sheng, one of the descendants of P'an-ku, the mythical creator of the world. Many other genii have, however, been connected with this mountain. According to the oldest legendary records, it was a female spirit, the Holy Mother, Sheng-mu, who was propitiated here to bring forth the all-important rain; but she also received sacrifices and prayers to accord victory in battle. More recent and still prevalent legendary traditions make the Hua-shan one of the centers of the cult of the Jade Maiden (Yü-nü) whose blessings are sought for the propagation of male offspring.

It might be added that the Hua-shan with its rugged peaks and valleys, adorned with rare forests and intimate expressions of the pious sense of centuries, belongs to the most scenic spots of all China.

The great temple at the foot of the mountain, one of the most magnificent products of Chinese architecture, has been transformed into an arsenal in Kuomintang times.

B. Religious Attitudes in the Northwest

In general the Chinese in the Northwest adhere to the so-called "Three Great Religions." Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism all play important parts in their religious system. In specific regions, Christianity, particularly the Catholic Church, has strong footholds among the local Chinese people. Where the people belong to the tradition of Chinese history and culture, scholarship and tradition have strengthened the cult of ancestor worship and the ideals and practices of Confucianism. There the blending of Confucian teachings, Buddhist ethics and Taoist principles predominates in the religious complex of the local inhabitants. In the border communities, strongly influenced by the nearby Tibetans, the Chinese include a large amount of Buddhistic observance and practice in their religious activities. They persist in styling themselves Confucianist in religious matters, but they devote their time and money to the performance of Buddhist ritual. It is reported that the Chinese of these areas are appreciably more religious than those of the more typically Chinese communities. Taoism is sandwiched into this all-embracing system of magical practices, necromancy and aberrant forms of philosophy.

Christianity first came to China through the Northwest and established its headquarters in Ch'ang-an (present Sian), the national capital during the Tang Dynasty. Missionaries of the Nestorian Church first brought Christianity to the trade routes in the present Northwest. The decisive, historically dated record in Chinese and in Syriac called the Nestorian monument,

or Ching-chiao pei in Chinese, which stands at Sian, varifies the fact that this church had been established among the Chinese people of Shensi Province. This early Christian movement in Northwest China suffered persecution and died out. In modern times both the Catholic and Protestant Churches came to the Northwest. Most of their converts have been Chinese. Until the Communist period the Catholic Church had been very strong in one place in Ninghsia Province. It rendered many kinds of service to its members and had a much stronger control over them than did the local government. To a great extent it had trespassed the jurisdiction of the government, which had created considerable resentment and suspicion among the authorities and the general populace. (See Social Structure.)

Though subscribing to all important religions in varying proportions, the Chinese in the Northwest, like those in other provinces, seem rather materialistic. Nowhere among them is there found a religious fervor and devotion which characterize both the Moslems and the Tibetans of this part of Asia. However, the religious atmosphere is very strong in all aspects of communal life, which are always cloaked with some religious rite. For example, the village or community theatrical has a great deal of religious implication. Although unlike the miracle plays and so-called devil dances of the Tibetans, the plays are usually straight drama, frequently historical, the primary significance of the presentation is a religious one. They give the gods pleasure and thus dispose them favorably toward the people of the community. Even the mask and the animal plays of the New Year's celebration have a definite religious significance.

Chinese home life is also mixed with religious or semi-religious feelings. Regardless of its wealth or locale, a Chinese home will have its ancestral tablets in the place of honor. The tablets represent those who have gone and keeps them and their memory always present. Those living now are only the present custodians of the family name.

"This belief. . . holds the members of one household together with strands which are not so much woven by affection as by a sense of mutual responsibility within a clan. . .

"At New Year the shack living room, miserable though it be, is the scene of the most exact rituals when, in absolutely correct order, each member of the family makes obeisance to the elders; the feasts fixed by the Chinese calendar are scrupulously observed, and I have known a man to carry a watermelon for days across the desert in order that at the Feast of the Moon, in the most desolate of wayside stages, he might put an old rickety table in the courtyard and offer the melon, cut in slices, to the Queen of Heaven.

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Tu ren

563 down their back their hair is spread out on a little piece of wood
291 which terminates in a plate. The latter is decorated with colored beads and cowrie shells and sticks out horizontally (Plate III). It is 20-25 centimeters in diameter. In order to make themselves
[302] even more beautiful and colorful, the young peasant women paint a round red disk on their Mongolian cheeks which are tanned a deep brown from the strong mountain sun. Thus, the spectacle with which one is confronted at the fairs in Wei yüan can is in point of color and gaiety not inferior to that of the temple festival at Gum bum.

527 The chief holiday of the Tu ren occurs annually during the second
563 Chinese month and falls on the days when the rivers which have been frozen during the cold season begin to thaw, but before the field work begins. It is at the same time the annual fête of Mother Earth. The Tu ren as well as many other inhabitants of the region gather together with their wives and children for eight to ten days in order to drink, sing and play. The gathering-place is a meadow
[346] south of the walls of the town, beside old Chinese graves. There
[669] is a large temple there in pure Chinese style with two courtyards, one behind the other, and beside it a second smaller Chinese temple has been erected for the manes of the Chinese who were killed during the last rebellion. In 1896 several hundred men fell into an ambush in front of Wei yüan bu and were killed to a man by the Dungan in hand-to-hand fighting. (It was almost always a hand-
● [211] to-hand battle.) Now each man's name is written on a small wooden tablet and they are set up on a long table-like structure of loam on the back wall of the temple. A young man had entered the
[782] temple with me. He lighted two thin incense sticks in front of one of the narrow wooden tablets and kowtowed three times before it. He was honoring the names of a close relative. There were incense candles burning in front of many of the other little tablets.

The festival at Wei yüan bu itself strikes the visitor as very worldly. Very few people pay any attention to the offerings, the cakes of wheat flour, the /251/ loaves of bread (1), the eggs,

252 1. The Tu ren, like the Mohammedans of Lanchow and Hochow, bake a leavened bread in small, round copper pans. Into the bread dough they mix the ashes of some kind of grass which is found near Tsing yüan and as far up as Di dao and which is burned in the fall in a sort of charcoal kiln. Otherwise only steamed, unleavened bread is eaten throughout West China